

26. H104

OUR COUNTRY'S CRISIS.

A Discourse delivered in Dubuque, Iowa, on Sabbath evening, July 6, 1856, by Rev. JOHN C. HOLBROOK, Pastor of the Congregational Church.

I. KINGS, 2: 2. "BE THOU STRONG, THEREFORE, AND SHOW THYSELF A MAN."

These were the dying words of David to Solomon his son and successor on the throne of Israel. The good old king had long and honorably reigned over that favored nation whose sovereign God had appointed him to be, and under his administration the country had attained a high degree of prosperity. He naturally felt desirous that his son, on whom the crown had now devolved, should act well his part on the stage of life, in the exalted station which he was to occupy, and that he should carry out the great fundamental principles on which the government was based. He therefore called him before him and gave him the solemn charge contained in the text. "I am," said he, "about to go the way of all the earth," and on you will devolve the duties and responsibilities of royalty, the care of this great nation and the maintenance of its valued institutions. "Be thou strong, therefore, and show thyself a man." Exhibit instead of the ignorance, timidity and irresolution of childhood, the courage and decision of manhood. Act as one endowed with reason to understand the right, and conscience to prompt you to pursue it. How appropriate such an admonition in the circumstances in which it was given, and how well calculated to stimulate Solomon to fill worthily his exalted and responsible position!

It seems to me, that if our Fathers who, years ago pledged their lives and fortunes and sacred honor, to the vindication of civil and religious liberty, and who laid the foundation of the government under which our country has attained so remarkable a degree of prosperity, were now alive and about to go the way of all the earth and to devolve on us, their sons and successors, the responsibility which was passing away from them, of preserving the National Institutions which they had established, they could use

no more appropriate words of exhortation to each one of us than those of David to Solomon, "Be thou, therefore, strong and show thyself a man." If ever there was a time in our national history not excepting that of the Revolution, when every good citizen needs to be strong in his determination to stand for the right and to show himself a man, it is now.

My friends, we have arrived at a critical period in our career as a nation, and how the tide will turn, and what will be the result of the present state of things is known only to God. I tremble when I think of our national degeneracy, and our national sins, which call loudly for the judgments of Heaven, and I shudder when I reflect on what may possibly be the record of history in respect to this era in our career. A fratricidal struggle is already begun in one locality within our borders, which may ripen into a general civil war, the bloodiest and most aggravated of all wars, while our foreign relations are such as to inspire us with alarm at the prospect of our being engaged in a contest with other powers, involving derangement of trade, the loss of millions of property and thousands of lives, and clothing the country in mourning, and filling the land with lamentations and tears. Nor are these the worst features of the case. The very first principles of liberty are in process of subversion among us, and the foundations of our privileges and republican institutions being removed, and the government, which was originally ordained for the protection of freedom, and the maintenance of human rights, is being prostituted to the purposes of oppression and the extension of slavery.

But, it may be said, there are mere political topics, and therefore inappropriate to the pulpit. Far from it, I reply. There are great moral issues involved in the struggle

which is upon us. The interests of religion, and the spiritual and eternal welfare of millions is concerned, as I could easily show had I time. Overthrow our glorious republic and you apparently throw back the millennium for centuries. Let slavery triumph over freedom in our land, and religion will receive a blow from which it will not recover for many long years: thousands upon thousands will be cut off from access to the Bible, denied liberty of conscience and freedom to obey God and the ordinances of religion, be doomed to spiritual darkness and a degradation but little if any less than that of multitudes in heathen lands, while the influence, resources and energies of the church for the world's evangelization will be crippled to an incalculable extent, as is apparent from comparing the efficiency and liberality of the slave states with those of the free in the work of home and foreign missions, and every philanthropic and religious enterprise.* Not alone for ourselves, then, and our children, do we desire to see freedom and not slavery nationalized here and extended over our new territories, but for the sake of humanity and a world to be evangelized and saved, and for the sake of millions in other lands who are sighing for liberty, and turning their anxious gaze to the far off shores of America to see the result of our great experiment of self government, and of the maintenance of religion on the voluntary system, and the support of the church divorced from the state.

As a Christian then, and especially as a Minister of Christ who came to "proclaim liberty to the captives and peace on earth and good will to man," and to strike the shackles from the mind and body of every human being and make him "the freeman of the Lord," I claim the right to speak and act in defence of our country's liberties and in conservation of the principles and institutions inaugurated here by the Fathers of the Republic. But even were there no strictly moral and religious issue involved, as a Christian and a Minister I am bound to speak and act for humanity, prompted by that philanthropy which is so essential an element in Christianity. It would be a shame for a professor of that faith to be one whit behind the very chiefest of the devotees of Liberty and the rights of man, in efforts to promote the universal freedom of our race and the protection of our national soil from the foul and blighting influence of Slavery. The first and great command is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," and the second, says our Savior, is like unto it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "On these two," adds he, "hang all the law and the prophets." Here is the sum and substance of all religion, and he who claims to love and serve God and yet cares not for

the rights and welfare of his fellow men, knows nothing of the true spirit of Christianity. "He has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." Secondary only to the requirement that we love God and seek to promote His interests, is that which demands of us to love and promote the best interests of man.

Tell me not, then, that the great question now at issue in our country and which is shaking it from centre to circumference is merely political or has no place in the pulpit and no claims upon Ministers and Christians, as such, to interest themselves in it. It is not merely political. It is not beyond the limits of ministerial and Christian responsibility. That I am not alone in this view is apparent from the fact that the General Congregational Associations of Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, Vermont, Connecticut and Massachusetts and every other great body of Ministers and representatives of the churches in our denomination that has lately met, has taken firm and decided action in reference to the present posture of our public affairs, and thus declared that the subject does not lie outside the sphere of Christian and ministerial action.

Rev. Dr. Bacon well remarked, in speaking on this subject in the General Association of Connecticut, a few days ago, "We are in perilous times. Our brother who has just spoken was not extravagant when he said that the days of the Revolution were not darker than these. [And no one condemns the action of Ministers who preached and prayed with reference to the principles and duties then involved, nor of Christians who interested themselves, as such, in the great struggle.] The crisis enforces heavy responsibilities upon us as pastors of churches and teachers of the people. We shall be traitors to Christ, traitors to our country, traitors to our children, if we do not publicly proclaim and seek to avert the peril of the present time. As a Minister of the Gospel," continued he, "I will pursue that course in my public labors that commends itself to my conscience as that which will maintain justice, peace and order." To all which I say, Amen.†

At this solemn moment in our national history I should not feel that I had done my duty or was prepared to go up to God and render an account of my stewardship if I did not speak and act, and "show myself a man" in this struggle. I enter upon my labors to-day conscientiously and with a deep sense of responsibility. I know some will not approve of what I may say and some, too, whom I have regarded as my friends, but I trust they will not deny to me freedom of speech. If they do I can only say with one of old "Amicus Plato, amicus Socrates, sed magis amica Veritas." That the importance of the crisis to which we have come has not been

exaggerated will be apparent if we consider what has already recently transpired in our country and what it is boldly avowed is to be attempted.

I. In the first place then, The freedom, purity and security of the ballot box have been publicly invaded.

The citizens of one of our Territories have been forcibly, and in open day, prevented from exercising the elective franchise in the choice of those who were to make their laws. This franchise is one of the dearest of our chartered rights as Americans; one for which our fathers fought, bled, and died; one which lies at the very foundation of republican institutions. Abolish this and you leave but the name of freedom without its highest privilege. Hordes of armed ruffians (as was before well known, but has been now demonstrated by the investigations of a committee of Congress on the spot,) have entered Kansas, taken possession of the polls, driven off the legal voters, and by fraud and violence and a mock election imposed legislators upon the people of that territory in the choice of whom they had no voice, and who were in the highest degree obnoxious to them, and some of whom were not even residents of the territory.

II. The legislators thus forced upon the people of that territory have enacted laws tyrannical and unconstitutional, at war with the principles of liberty, and abhorrent to every heart actuated by right moral feelings.

These laws forbid freedom of discussion on great questions of civil policy, and the expression of opinions on points intimately connected with the welfare and prosperity of society. Opinions which were held by Jefferson, Adams, Franklin, Sherman, Madison, and all the founders of our republic, and which are distinctly set forth in the Declaration of Independence, and which are cherished by the great body of moral and intelligent citizens of the United States, are interdicted by these laws, and those who dare to utter them are branded as felons, and those who refuse to submit to these laws are denounced as traitors. And to these laws are affixed Draconian penalties, barbarous and cruel in the extreme. For instance, for harboring, assisting or concealing a runaway slave in that territory, once solemnly consecrated to freedom, and where by solemn compact it had been agreed that servile bondage should never exist, it is decreed that the offender shall suffer death! To print or put in circulation "any book, paper, pamphlet, magazine, handbill, or circular containing any statements, arguments, opinion, sentiment, doctrine, advice or innuendo calculated to produce a disorderly, dangerous or rebellious disaffection among the slaves, or to induce such slaves to escape from the service of their masters, or to resist their authority;" is

felony punishable with 5 years imprisonment; for printing, publishing or circulating any document containing any denial of the right to hold slaves, is also a felony punishable by two years imprisonment at hard labor.—No person can sit on a jury who is "conscientiously opposed to slavery," and all officers of the territory are obliged to swear to sustain the fugitive slave law, as well as the organic law of the territory, and no man can vote even, who does not do the same, and consent when called upon, to follow the bloodhounds on the track of the slave fleeing from bondage.

By these laws it will be seen that freedom of speech, of the press and even of thought are suppressed and every man is disfranchised who conscientiously holds that Slavery is wrong, and who will not actively aid in upholding it, however obnoxious such a course may be to his cherished views of human rights or of political economy.

III. These laws, enacted by legislators foisted into office by foreign votes and power, against the will of the actual residents of the Territory, have been attempted to be enforced by armed bands from an adjoining State. In this attempt the right of citizens to keep and bear arms has been infringed, the right of speedy and impartial trial by jury has been denied; the rights of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and against unreasonable search and seizure, has been violated; the people have been deprived of life, liberty, and property, without due process of law; murders, robberies and arsons have been instigated and encouraged, and the offenders allowed to go unpunished." These things, too, have been done with the knowledge, sanction and even co-operation of the National Administration.

IV. It has thus been attempted by its friends and advocates, in connection with the National Administration, to force the odious institution of slavery upon the people of Kansas—a region once solemnly set apart for freedom—an institution opposed to the spirit of the age and of christianity, denounced by the whole civilized world, and deeply abhorrent to the feelings of the great majority of the citizens of that Territory.—And in this attempt blood has been shed, and the fires of civil war lighted up, which may end in a general conflagration, sweeping over the whole land.

V. Nor is this all. The sacred right of freedom of debate in the Senate of the United States has been attacked, and in the very face of the Constitution, which guarantees it and declares that no individual shall be elsewhere called to account for words uttered in discussion there, a Senator has been with brutal violence stricken down by a ruffian hand in an ungarded moment, and his

blood has flowed upon that floor where he dared to stand up as the champion of human rights. And that has been done for worlds uttered in a speech during the whole progress of which he was never so much as once called to order for the violation of parliamentary rules. And what is worse and more alarming than the act itself, which might else have been regarded as only an outrage by an individual bully, the crime thus committed remains, and is likely to remain unpunished, and thus, as has well been said in the resolutions of the Connecticut Association, "converted into a national sin, and a monument of national infamy, not only by its impunity, but by the loud voiced and almost uncontradicted approval which has hailed it in one portion of our common country, and the base apologies which have been offered for it elsewhere." Nor is even this all, or the worst. There is abundant evidence that this monstrous act of audacity was fully premeditated, and not the effect of a sudden outbreak of passion, and that it was not the act of an individual alone, but the result of concert among many who meant thus to intimidate the friends of freedom, and failing to silence them by argument, to shut them up by force, and thus to hush the utterance of liberty in opposition to slavery in the very capital of our republic.

VI. The doctrine has been published to the world, that whenever our safety, (by which is meant the interests of Slavery,) requires it, the territories of foreign powers are to be seized by force, if they can be secured in no other way, and a man whose name was appended to the document in which this atrocious sentiment is proclaimed to the world, has been nominated for, and is sought to be elected to the chief magistracy of this nation.† His election will be of course the endorsement of this doctrine and the inauguration of it as the policy of the country, which must necessarily involve us in foreign wars, really for the maintenance of slavery.

Thus we see that a state of things exists among us that is alarming in the highest degree, and which—when we take into account the ultimate object had in view by the authors and abettors of these outrages and plans, viz: to maintain slavery and extend its area, and compel the citizens of the free States to acquiesce and refrain from all opposition to it—may well be regarded as a tremendous crisis in our public affairs, and which may justly awaken the most painful apprehensions in the mind of every reflecting and patriotic citizen. The very landmarks of liberty are being removed and the whole policy of our government is sought to be changed since the days when its framers aided in its administration and expounded the Constitution. Then it was clearly and explicitly avowed that the promotion of freedom, and not of

slavery, was the grand object and design. "The Constitution," it was declared, "was ordained for the establishment of justice, the insurance of domestic tranquillity, providing for the common defence, promoting the general welfare, and securing the blessings of liberty and the protection of the life and property of every citizen." Nor was it ever dreamed that it would become the palladium of slavery, or that the government instituted by it would ever be employed to promote slavery and extend it beyond its original limits. Slavery was regarded as wrong by Jefferson, Washington, and multitudes of others who were slaveholders or residents of the Slave States, and by all the leading men of the free States, and was almost universally considered a moral and political evil which was to be tolerated for a while but got rid of as soon as possible.**

The design of our Constitution and government, then, was the promotion of freedom and not slavery, the protection of human rights and not of oppression and wrong. From this original design they have been perverted, and the whole array of the national power and governmental influence has been turned from its legitimate end to the protection and extension of slavery, and the advancement of the peculiar institution of one section of the country. If this course is allowed to continue unrebuked, it will result in a complete revolution, nationalizing slavery instead of freedom, and changing the whole form of our government from a Republic to an Oligarchy and concentrating power in the hands of a few thousand slaveholders instead of the millions of the people. It will, in effect, make slaves of the freemen of the North, for the protection of slavery at the South, wresting from them their dear bought and long cherished rights of free speech, a free press, a free soil, and freedom of action. They will even be compelled to submit to the hateful sound of the clanking chain of the slave and of the whip of his driver, and to the odious sight of human beings in servile bonds even on the once free soil of their own States. Nothing less than this is the aim of those who are active in the scenes which have been alluded to, and of those who have encouraged, aided and abetted them, one of whom boldly and insolently announced some time since that he would yet call the roll of his slaves under the very shadow of Bunker Hill, and on the self same spot where flowed like water the best blood of the Revolution in defence of freedom.

Yes, it is painfully evident—nay, it is boldly avowed, that the upholders of slavery, who are responsible for the present alarming state of things, not content with the enjoyment of the privilege of oppression in the original slave States, where there has been no general attempt to disturb them—not sat.

ified even with one compromise and concession after another by which the area of slavery has been enlarged, contrary to the original design of the founders of our Republic, including slaveholders themselves, are determined to force upon the free States the recognition of their right, which it was originally acknowledged was local, to hold their slaves, everywhere, where floats the flag of our Union upon the breeze. The claim now is, that slaveholders may transfer their peculiar institution to any part of the territories of the United States, and demand the protection of it from the government, and that even into the free States they may carry their slaves and be protected in their privileges on the hills of N. Hampshire and Vermont as well as on the magnificent and hitherto free prairies of the West, and that whoever shall dare to dispute this right shall be branded as a felon and a traitor. The work has been begun in Kansas and in Washington, but only to be prosecuted in Nebraska and the regions beyond, in Minnesota, Iowa, New England, and every State in the Union, as fast and as far as it can be done. The proceedings in Kansas and Washington are but the entering wedge to prepare the way for further advances, and new and more audacious aggressions upon freedom.††

And what is more alarming than all the rest, is the fact that a large and influential party has arrayed itself in support of these principles, as far as developed, embracing the whole South, and not a few at the North, and which is to wield all the patronage and influence of the government if successful in establishing this as the settled policy of the nation. And now the struggle has commenced, and it is soon to be determined what shall be the result. On the one side are the friends and supporters of slavery, and the opponents of free soil, free speech, and a free press, and on the other are the advocates of liberty, and of the God-given and inalienable rights of man as set forth in the Declaration of Independence. It will soon be settled which shall be the policy of our nation. If one party triumphs, all the outrages perpetrated in behalf of slavery are sanctioned, and the right to exclude slavery *wholly* from their borders as sovereign States by the Northern members of the Union, and the complete freedom of speech and of the press are annihilated. Farewell then to liberty at the North and West; farewell to the cherished hopes of the world; farewell to all the bright anticipations of the Jeffersons, Madisons, Henrys, Adamses, and other apostles of freedom. Not a free republic will then exist on earth. The triumphs of the pro-slavery party will inaugurate a long and dreary night of darkness and despair upon our country, and the world and future generations must fight over again, even on these

shores, the battles of the Revolution. Where, where will be the refuge of liberty, when hunted from our land?

This, then, is not a contest on which we have entered for some unimportant point of national policy, or mere question of political economy, but for the *fundamentals* of liberty. It is not a contest for an abstraction. It is not a contest for the freedom of the negro only, or for the rights of another race. It is a struggle for *our own* dearly bought and cherished rights. It is a question whether *we* and our children shall be free or slaves, independent, or subject to the dictation of an oligarchy as to how and when we shall speak or publish our opinions, whether or not *we* shall enjoy free speech, a free press, live on free soil and surrounded only by freemen, or be under censorship, and have our territory soiled by slavery, and behold in our very midst men reduced to the level of brutes and treated as chattels.

And now the question arises, and a deeply solemn and interesting question it is, *What shall be done?* What is the duty of every lover of freedom, every friend of humanity, every patriot, every christian in the alarming crisis which is upon us? To this I answer:

I. He is bound to re-assert and defend the first principles of republicanism, which are assailed and attempted to be set aside in our land.

Strange, indeed, is it that in this boasted land of liberty and intelligence, in this 80th year of our national independence, while yet the noble utterances of the apostles of liberty and of human rights have hardly died upon the ear, and while they are yet fresh in our memories, it should be necessary to exhort American citizens to re-assert and defend the very foundation doctrines on which our government was originally based! But, alas, so it is. These doctrines are denied, and a course is pursued in diametrical opposition to them, as we have seen, and this is sustained and defended extensively by the public press, by public men,†† by the people of whole States, at the South, and even apologized for, connived at and encouraged by not a few at the North.

It is needful, then, that every real Republican, every enlightened and patriotic citizen should array himself on the side of truth and right, and by his voice in discussion, by private conversation, by his pen if he can wield it with power, and by his vote when he meets the question at the polls, and by all means and instrumentalities at his command make his influence felt in behalf of freedom and the interpretation of our constitution and the administration of our government according to their original intent. He is bound to be openly known as decidedly opposed to the violence, disorder and perversion of the

Constitution which are now exhibited in our land. Less than this is unfaithfulness to his obligations as "a man," a patriot and a Christian. Silence and inaction, even, are inexcusable, for they are constructive approval of the wrong and virtual cooperation with evil doers. Let no man shrink from duty then, or hope to avoid responsibility by indifference. As he values his own rights and the rights of unborn millions whose condition of freedom or slavery may be determined this year, let him not fail to speak and act. Let the voice of the people be heard as the sound of many waters, reverberating among the hills and valleys, and sounding over the broad prairies of our land, thundering in the ears of demagogues and tyrants and violators of human rights, declaring that the constitution shall be preserved, and this government held to its original purpose of promoting freedom and not slavery. Let this be done now and emphatically, and a death blow will, we may hope, be struck at that gigantic scheme which is on foot to subvert constitutional liberty and inaugurate Slavery as a national institution in our land.

Let us stand by and support that noble band of heroes who in Kansas are fighting over again the battles of freedom which our fathers once fought on the bloody fields of the Revolution—who are fighting not for themselves alone, but for multitudes of their fellow men who are sought to be enslaved on that soil, nay, who are fighting for us and our children, and for millions who may come after us. ¶ He takes but a limited view of the great struggle now going on who sees only Kansas and her enemies involved in it, and who regards the issue as alone, whether Kansas shall be a free State, and free speech and a free press exist there. The question is not the question of Kansas only but of all the present and future Territories of the U. S., and not these alone, but of the States, for if the principle contended for by the slaveholders is decided in their favor, then slavery is nationalized, and that odious institution goes wherever the flag of the Union floats on the breeze at home or abroad, and the whole power of the national government is pledged to its protection. Let the principle contended for by the Pro-Slavery party be sustained by the popular vote, and the lash of the negro driver, and the cry of the oppressed may be heard in our streets, and we may be doomed to behold the horrible spectacle even here, under our very windows, of human beings made in the image of God, denied the rights of a man and treated as a brute beast—nay, this sight may be witnessed in any spot however consecrated heretofore to freedom, wherever the slaveholder may choose to go, even under the shade of Bunker Hill, or at Lexington. No public sentiment, no local legislation, no earthly power can pro-

tect the heretofore freest of our free soil from the polluting tread of slavery.

II. It is the duty of every friend of freedom and humanity from this time forth to take a firm and decided stand against slavery. Too long already have we connived at this great system of iniquity and injustice, which is at war with our institutions; too long have we yielded to its arrogant and increasing demands; too long been content to see our brethren crushed beneath its oppressions.—Slavery is the demon that is continually disturbing our national repose, and threatening to involve us in civil and foreign war, and to break the brotherly bonds of our glorious and beloved Union. Nor can we have quiet and harmony at home, and peaceful relations abroad until its aggressive spirit is rebuked, and the people rise up in their majesty and say, hitherto shalt thou come, but *no farther*.

There can be no dispute that it is this aggressive spirit of slavery that has brought on the present crisis in our country, and produced the existing commotions, and arrayed different sections of the Union against each other, and which now fills the air with portents of coming fearful and bloody strife among ourselves and with other nations.—This spirit is the legitimate nature of slavery. Slavery is the guilty cause, I repeat, of our present troubles. To be satisfied of this it is only necessary to look back a short space, and compare the state of the country and of the public mind then with what they are now, and consider how and when the present excitement began.

The question of slavery had been, as was said and fondly hoped, put *forever* at rest by compromise, (a fatal and mistaken policy, as all experience has proved,) and the public mind had settled down quietly on the assurance that no further claim should be made for the extension of slavery than that which had been allowed and secured. But in an unhappy hour the compromise (which, however obnoxious to the multitude at the North originally, had been acquiesced in by the great majority for the sake of peace, and was regarded as sacred as an agreed ground of settlement,) was abrogated, and new and before almost unheard of claims were set up in behalf of the system of human bondage, and the determination was expressed, which was attempted to be carried out in practice, of planting this hateful institution on the virgin soil of territory once solemnly devoted to freedom. The claim of such a right as that of carrying slavery into all the territories of the United States, which has now been set up, would once have been treated with ridicule and contempt, and scarcely a man who had any regard for his political and moral character, would have dared to have publicly advocated it.

This power was expressly denied to the

people of the Territory north-west of the Ohio by Jefferson's immortal Ordinance, framed in 1784, but first adopted by Congress in 1787, under which Ordinance Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin were first organized as Territories and finally ripened into States, and when the Governor and Legislature of Indiana, representing a great majority of the people, petitioned Congress for leave to hold slaves for a limited period, John Randolph, from a committee composed two-thirds of slaveholders, reported against granting leave, and the House, unanimously sustained the report.

The consequences of the abrogation of the compromise and this new exhibition of the true aggressive spirit of Slavery we all know. The record is written in blood, and a struggle has commenced fiercer and more bitter and exciting than has ever been known in the land, and which threatens to rupture our national ties and which will only end in the triumph of freedom or slavery once for all. The issue is now distinctly made before the country, the sole issue which will soon be settled.

Never before has such a state of things existed; never before has a national election turned on this point alone. Never before has the public mind been aroused to look at this one point, the antagonism of freedom and slavery on our soil, disconnected with other questions of party politics and internal policy, and in immediate view of its *practical* application. But now all other issues are set aside; every other great political difference is ignored; bank, tariff, and other subjects of dispute have been decided and the country has acquiesced in the result, and had not slavery now put forth its aggressive spirit, there would be profound internal peace—a political millennium. The issue between slavery and freedom, and the question which shall be nationalized, and to the support of which the government shall be devoted, is before the people, and must be settled.

And in the aspect in which this question is presented, there is a new feature of national politics, a new element brought into play.—The *conscience and moral feelings* of vast multitudes are enlisted, as they have never been on mere points of political policy and economy heretofore. Parties differed in judgment as to the expediency of certain measures, but no question of conscience and morality was involved. Now, however, call it fanaticism if you will, there is deeper and more powerful principles at work on one side, and which will not be quieted as heretofore by an adverse result of the coming election. Never, no never, will the northern mind consent to have slavery nationalized; never will it settle down quietly while that odious system is extended and protected by

the national flag and national power, and it never should. For one, I solemnly declare, I never will acquiesce in such a result. The North loves the Union, but loves it as the means of sustaining and promoting liberty and not slavery.***

The people of the north have been willing to allow slavery to remain where it was originally established in the Southern States, throwing the responsibility upon those who sustain it there, until in the course of time and amid the progress of light, and under the power of the Gospel and the influence of the united public sentiment of the world against it, its supporters should see both its moral guilt and deformity, and utter inconsistency with the true principles of political economy, and its antagonism to republicanism, and voluntarily abolish it—the people of the North, I say, have been willing to leave it there, *provided it would confine itself to its original and legitimate limits*. But they never will, and they never should sit down quietly and see it nationalize itself, and claim the protection of the national power and the national flag, wherever that flag is unfurled. No, that would be to prostitute "the star spangled banner," indeed, which was ordained

"In triumph to wave,

O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave."

Experience has abundantly shown in all the past, however, that slavery never will rest content, if indeed it can exist, confined to its original limits, and with free speech and a free press, either at the North or South, in Congress or out of it. There is not, in fact, at this moment, and there cannot be while slavery exists, free speech and a free press at the South. What testimony is this as to the antagonism of freedom and slavery, and how inconsistent with true republicanism a system that demands the sacrifice of these to its maintenance and safety.

Let us then resolve that we will, from this time forth and forever, do what we can peaceably, constitutionally and rightfully for the removal of this evil from our land. Let us adopt the sentiment of Thomas Jefferson who said, "I have sworn upon the altar of my God, eternal hostility to tyranny in every form over the minds and bodies of men." Let us feel in regard to the Union as Henry Clay did in regard to his native and adopted States, when he said, "If I could only be instrumental in ridding of the Foul Blot of Slavery, that revered State that gave me birth, or that no less beloved State which I now represent upon this floor, I would not exchange the honor for that of the most successful conqueror that ever lived."†††

III. It is the duty of every patriot to recognize our dependance on God, and to make the condition of the country, the subject of earnest, persevering, and importunate prayer.

This, after all, is our chief ground of hope, viz: that God will interpose in our behalf, and in answer to prayer avert from us the fearful calamities that are impending over us. While I realize my own responsibility and that of my fellow citizens to act in this crisis in the manner pointed out, yet I feel that vain is the help of man without God. If he gives us up we are lost. The selfishness and depravity of man will work our ruin, and his shortsightedness and proneness to error will lead us astray, and by compromises and temporizing expedients, rather than grappling with the difficulty and pressing it to a true issue, and we shall be involved more deeply than ever in trouble. But God sees into the future. He can turn the hearts of men as the rivers of water are turned. He can bring the counsels of Ahithophel to naught. He can "cause the wrath of man to praise Him and the remainder of it restrain." He alone can rouse and keep awake the public conscience, open the eyes of the blinded and deluded, point out the path of safety, carry us dry shod through the Red Sea that confronts us, and so control circumstances as to deliver us out of all our troubles. On Him, then, we must cast our country, in earnest prayer for deliverance, doing all we can to turn the tide of public sentiment in the right direction.

We are assured in the scriptures that prayer exerts a mighty influence on the destinies of men, both as individuals and nations. But the world understands but faintly its power and importance, while even Christians are far from realizing their privilege and responsibility in regard to it. Men of the world are too often practical atheists. They do not recognize the providence of God in the affairs and government of nations. Their reliance is on human skill and cunning and power, and their resort is chiefly to party devices and manoeuvres and statecraft for securing their political ends, rather than on God. And there is great danger that Christians will encourage and even cooperate with them too far in this, and that they will, calculating only human forces and party resources, either despond or be too much elated by outward appearances and circumstances, and not bring the Divine element into the account.

For myself I am no partizan in politics. I have no love for merely political parties as such, and will not identify myself with any, and pledge myself, as too many do, to go with and sustain it in all things, right or wrong. I have long ago eschewed all such party allegiance. Nor have I any very great confidence in political parties and especially in mere party leaders. I have, therefore, no faith in the happy issue of the present struggle to save our country as a mere party measure, or in consequence of the pop-

ularity of any candidate, or the excitement of popular enthusiasm by means of any political clap trap, nor as the result of movements and measures to circumvent or outmanoeuvre the Pro Slavery party. I have been too often disappointed in the result of such contests and efforts, have seen too much deception, too much selfishness, too much of a disposition to resort to compromise and expediency regardless of the right, and too much readiness to sacrifice truth and justice for the sake of victory and the spoils of office. Still we must act with some party in such a crisis as this, the party that is aiming at the results we desire. But my hope is in God and in the efficacy of prayer.

This may save our country from impending ruin, though of this I do not feel sure. It may be that our national sins are too great to allow us to go unpunished. It may be that the exigencies of God's moral government require that he should make a fearful example of us, as he did of his chosen people Israel. It may be that the cries of the oppressed in our land have to come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth that God cannot avert his chastising rod, but must execute vengeance upon us as a nation for the sake of the moral effect and for producing an impression upon his moral subjects. Thomas Jefferson once said in view of our national sin of slavery, "I tremble for my country when I think that God is just."

Nations, as such, must be punished in this world, if at all. Individual retribution may be postponed till the future day of accounts, but nations do not exist as such in the world to come. Their retribution has been and must ever be in this world. Sometimes, indeed, it may be averted, as in the case of Ninevah, by timely repentance, or God may pass by the iniquities of a people when not too aggravated, on account of the righteous men among them, and in answer to their prayers. Thus ten righteous men would have saved Sodom; and thus, though he did not withhold altogether his judgments, yet he promised that the days of calamity to Jerusalem should be shortened "for the elect's sake."

But it is sometimes the case that national iniquities are so aggravated that God cannot mitigate or turn away deserved wrath.—Thus he told Ezekiel to declare to Israel, "when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch forth my hand upon it and will break the staff of the bread thereof and will send famine upon it and will cast off man and beast from it; though these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job were in it they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God." These eminently pious men had all been the means of averting the judgments of God from those who were associated with

them or for whom they interceded, but when Israel should sin grievously, God declared that though they were all three together in the land they should not save it, but only deliver their own souls. And now, have we not "sinned grievously" as a nation, in many respects, but especially by oppressing our fellow men, and that, too, under aggravating circumstances; in face of our solemn declaration to the world that "we hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, LIBERTY and the pursuit of happiness; and that to secure these, governments are instituted among men!"

Even we of the North are not guiltless in this thing. We have connived at slavery, apologized for it, sanctioned it more or less, yielded to its claims, compromised to allow its spread, and permitted it to gather strength and to entrench itself in the very capital of our country, there to poison the very fountains and streams of governmental influence? Have we not joined in denouncing agitation on slavery, rebuked those who labored for its removal, acted with parties pledged not to disturb it, and allowed it to grow up into a giant system among us, defying all rebuke and all restraint. And now if retribution must come, *how* shall it come but in the line of our sin? This is often God's method of punishment. He says "shall not thine own wickedness correct thee, and thy backslidings reprove thee?" If slavery involves us in civil war, and proves our ruin, will it not be a just mode of retribution? If it deluge our land in blood and fill it with lamentation before it be abolished, or if it shall be allowed to triumph, and we be made to feel its withering effects and taste its tyrannical sway, as our brethren in Kansas have, will there not be a striking appropriateness in the *mode* of chastisement for the sin?

I have long entertained alarming apprehensions as to the result of slavery in our land, and feared the calamities it might bring upon us, and I fear more than ever now.—And this fear I share with many great and good and judicious men. Hon J. F. Redfield, Chief Justice of Vermont, already alluded to in a note, has lately published his apprehensions, and he has ever been noted for his conservatism, and has had no sympathy with Senator Sumner and his friends. He says;

"Till this, we have labored to maintain a hopeful heart for the future history of the republic. We have discountenanced the slavery agitation, we have regarded all sectional agitation as worthy of rebuke, we have never felt any personal sympathy with Senator Sumner's peculiar theories, though we have always respected him as a highly cul-

tivated gentleman and a scholar. But, after this, we must say that it seems to us impossible longer to doubt that the decree has already gone forth from the throne of Omnipotence, that the republic shall perish!"

We talk of a dissolution of the Union as the possible result of slavery, but as Dr. Bacon truly remarked lately, "A civil war we may have, but this Union can never be dissolved. The ~~Slave~~ and free States can never divide and exist as separate governments. If the Union were dissolved, the South could not endure such neighbors as we, and we could not endure such neighbors as they. No result could follow but war, and war would end in the subjugation of one party or the other, and in an annexation either on the basis of freedom in every State, or of Slavery from the Penobscot to the Potomac." Who does not tremble at such a prospect? And yet this may be our future history and the retribution for our sin, and in this way God may abolish Slavery and bid the oppressed go free amid the horrors of a civil war which would throw into the shade the bloodiest contests recorded in history; or as the result of the struggle in favor of freedom, for who can doubt that in such a struggle the forces of liberty would be in the ascendant? May God avert so direful a calamity, and that he may, let us humble ourselves before Him, confess and repent of our national sin, and seek its removal and pray for mercy through our Lord Jesus Christ. He may hear and in wrath remember mercy, if our guilt is not so great that though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in the land they could not save it. Let us seek a peaceful removal of the evil that exists among us, while we pray God to interpose, and especially let us set ourselves against its extension. Let us not be irresolute and timid, but "be strong and show ourselves men" in this eventful crisis.

I have spoken freely of our country's crisis, of its cause, and of our duty. Let me not be misunderstood in one respect. I abhor slavery, and my indignation is roused at the outrages which it has prompted, and at the designs of its supporters, but I have no malice, none but the kindest feelings towards the people of the South. I regard them as fellow countrymen, and God knows I would do anything to remove "the foul blot" from their section of the Union, and to relieve them from the curse that is upon them, the fatal incubus upon their prosperity. I love the Union, and have prayed and will pray and labor for its preservation so long as it will avail, and provided it does not demand of me for its continuance the sacrifice of the chartered rights of freedom which I enjoy. I would do or say nothing needlessly to excite hostility between the people of the North and the South. And while I would be guarded myself, I would warn you

my hearers, against the indulgence or manifestation of sectional hostility or enmity against men, while we resist the aggressions of slavery. Let us avoid a mere partisan spirit, and go forth in a dignified manner, as becomes men and christians, to this great moral issue and struggle. Let us pray for the upholders of slavery, that the wilful may see their guilt, the deluded their error, and all, the danger involved, that the evil may be peacefully removed before the judgments of heaven shall come upon us and them, and involve us in a common ruin.

It is proper to say that the matter in the notes to this discourse has been added since its delivery, for illustration and confirmation of its positions. The body of the discourse, with some slight verbal alterations, is essentially as it was preached.

*Not only does the South do little for missions at home or abroad, but it is constantly drawing on the benevolence of the North to sustain and propagate the Gospel in its own borders, and an Association called the "Southern Aid Society" is necessary to collect funds in the Free States to supply the destitutions of the slave region, and that too when both sections have equal natural advantages, and have had the same length of time to develop their resources and the influence of their respective institutions. What then would be the loss to religion and the world if the incubus of Slavery should be allowed to fasten on the vast regions of the West, and extend its influence in the North?

†A Committee of nine of the large and venerable General Congregational Association of Massachusetts at its recent meeting unanimously reported the following preamble and resolutions which were unanimously adopted by that body:

Whereas, in view of late occurrences in Congress and in one of the Territories, growing out of the encroachments of Slavery, we are constrained to regard the condition of our country as solemn and critical beyond any through which we have ever passed; therefore

Resolved, That the crisis calls to special prayer for the nation, and to redoubled efforts to deepen and diffuse the spirit of the Gospel, as the only remedy for existing evils, and the only foundation of hope for the perpetuity of American Institutions.

Resolved, That passing events call upon us, as Christian patriots to stand firm in our defence of the interests of freedom, and of the Union, and to seek to promote them in all lawful, wise, and Christian methods.

The following is the action of the General Convention of Vermont:

"We see no occasion to repeat what this Convention has more than once heretofore expressed respecting the moral and social wrongfulness of the system of slavery existing in our country, and our desire for its speedy termination; but in the developments of its tendencies and its bearings on the rights of our citizens and the institutions of our land which have recently been made, we see cause for prompt and decided action." Therefore Resolved:

"1. That this Convention regards events which have recently occurred at the Seat of our General Government, and in the remote Territory of Kansas, as evincing a premeditated and concerted purpose, already ripening into violent efforts, to put down the freedom of speech and of the press,

so far as they are opposed to slavery, to trample under foot the constitution and laws of the land, and to substitute for the sovereignty of the people the arbitrary will of that small fraction of our population, which is composed of slaveholders; thus subverting the vital fundamental principle on which alone a Government of freedom and equal rights can be based or maintained.

"2. That, in this manifest endeavor to force the public mind of this nation to acquiesce in the unlimited extension and perpetuation of slavery, in the results to which they have already led, and in the perils which they threaten, this Convention see cause for alarm and anxious forebodings in respect to the future peace and welfare of our beloved country; and, in our judgement, all the friends of free institutions are called upon firmly to determine that the territorial extension of slavery, and its baneful influence on our national councils, **WE AT THIS POINT BE ARRESTED.**

"3. That we assure our brethren and friends in Kansas of our sympathy with them in their struggles with the opposers of law and freedom in that Territory, and in the dangers and sufferings which they are enduring; and while we commend them for their moderation, their fortitude, and their determined devotedness to the cause of law and free institutions, and earnestly pray that God will protect, strengthen and prosper them in their present momentous conflict—we would urgently appeal to the friends of the cause in which they are engaged, to furnish them such aid as their exigencies may require; especially do we hope that the friends of free institutions will as permanent residents, resort to that Territory in such numbers as effectually to rescue it from the blighting influence of slavery.

"4. That, in the present alarming condition of our country, threatened on the one hand by the unrestricted extension of Slavery, and on the other, by anarchy and civil war already begun; our trust must be in God, and it becomes us, as a people, to pray earnestly and unceasingly for his merciful interposition; and this Convention especially recommend to the ministers and people of God, throughout this State, to bear this subject on their hearts, in the prayers of the closet, and of the family, and social meetings, particularly during the second week in July ensuing, and that, on the second Sabbath evening of that month, it be the subject of concerted prayer in all our churches."

‡ The Legislature elected in the manner described has been twice acknowledged and defended by the President of the United States in messages to Congress, and these odious laws recognized in all the action of the Government as rightfully binding on the people, and to be enforced by the military power and the ruffians defended and backed up in their outrages, while scarcely anything has been done to protect lawful citizens. The Government has, both by omission and commission, countenanced and encouraged these atrocities. The *Richmond Enquirer*, an able and prominent Administration paper, lately contained a leading article congratulating its readers on the success of the conjoined efforts of "the government" and the ruffians in Kansas, in putting down rebellion!

¶ Alluding to this doctrine, the Savannah, Ga., *Republican*, after quoting from the Ostend Circular, says:

"The atrocious proposition is here advanced that if Spain will not part with Cuba for a price, we should wrest it from her! This is the argument of the brigand, who proceeds to take the purse of the traveller who has the temerity to refuse to yield it up."

The following is an extract from the Ostrnd Circular:

"After we shall have offered Spain a price for Cuba far beyond its present value, and this shall have been refused, it will be time to take into consideration the question, Does Cuba in the possession of Spain seriously endanger our internal peace and the existence of our cherished Union?"

Should this question be answered in the affirmative, then by every law, human and divine, we shall be justified in wresting it from Spain if we possess the power."

That there is danger of the immediate practical application of this principle if the slavery party gains the power appears from another paragraph in the same document:

"Considerations exist which render delay in the acquisition of this island exceedingly dangerous to the United States.

The system of immigration and labor lately organized within its limits, and the tyranny and oppression which characterize its immediate rulers, threaten an insurrection at every moment, which may result in direful consequences to the American people.

Cuba has thus become to us an unceasing danger and a permanent cause of anxiety and alarm."

On this the N. Y. Evening Post remarks:

"In the first place, Mr. Buchanan declares that delay in the acquisition of Cuba is exceedingly dangerous to the United States; the system of emigration to that island and of labor, which has lately been introduced, makes it so. Everybody knows what that system is—an attempt to modify the institution of slavery, and soften its rigors. After alluding to this subject, Mr. Buchanan repeats that Cuba, in its present state, is an unceasing danger to the United States and a permanent cause of anxiety and alarm.

Here he settles the question that our national safety requires us to possess Cuba."

"* Nothing is capable of clearer demonstration than these assertions. If any one wishes for evidence let him refer to Mr. Madison's reports of debates on the Constitution, or to Sumner's speech entitled "Freedom national; Slavery sectional"—in which he will find declarations from the leading men north and south, of their opinions, decisions of the supreme courts of Slave states, and testimony in abundance from the churches and literature of the early days of our government. The term slave does not pollute the Constitution, and when it was proposed to insert it Mr. Madison said, "It must not be, because we intend this Constitution to be the great charter of human liberty to the unborn millions who shall enjoy its protection, and who should never see that such an institution as slavery was ever known in our midst." Washington said that "it was his first wish to see some plan adopted by which slavery might be abolished, and desired the formation of a Society, and said he would second it and give his vote in favor of any Legislative enactment for the abolition of slavery." Jefferson eloquently denounced the system. Patrick Henry, while confessing that he had slaves said, "I will not, I cannot justify it. However culpable my conduct, I will so far pay my devoir to virtue, as to own the excellence and rectitude of her precepts, and lament my want of conformity to them." Pinckney, of Maryland, branded slavery as "iniquitous and dishonorable, as shameful in its continuance as in its origin." Jay called it an "iniquity, a sin of a crimson dye." The Supreme Court of Mississippi has said, "slavery is condemned by reason, and the laws of nature. It exists, and can only exist thorough municipal regulations." The

Supreme Court of Kentucky has declared, "we view this as a right existing by positive law of a municipal character, without foundation in the law of nature, or the unwritten and common law."

"It is time the friends of Freedom were aware of the designs of the slaveholding Oligarchy, which they are to be aided in carrying out as they expect at the North and West. The novel doctrine has been broached of the right to carry Slavery into all the Territories and this claim is in process of being enforced by dint of arms. Simultaneously with this it is asserted—in opposition to all past decisions of the highest judicial authorities in England, and of the Supreme Courts of our own States, including Slave States, that Slavery is local and the creature of municipal laws and that in has no existence beyond the sphere of such local law—it is asserted, we say, that the slaveholder may carry his property into the Free States temporarily. It will be but a short step next to claim the right to the permanent possession of slaves in Free States. Nor will it be long before the foreign slave trade will be required to be revived and legalized and protected by our national flag. If Slavery is right and a beneficial system to both master and slave, no human being can successfully deny the propriety of the slave trade. Then Cuba and other foreign countries, whose possession is important to the interests of Slavery must be seized and annexed. In addition to all this, free speech and a free press must be suppressed at the North as they are now at the South. This is the programme and this is what will be accomplished if the measures commenced by the Slavery propagandists are not rebuked and resisted now. Thus the Richmond Enquirer congratulates its readers on the success of the Ruffians in connection with the United States Government, in Kansas, and that some of the Anti-Slavery leaders have been caned and Mr. Buchanan nominated for the Presidency.

"By exposing and caning the leaders, we shall soon throw the troops into confusion. We are doing well in Washington and we are doing well in Kansas."

"And yet with all this, the Enquirer is not satisfied, as witness the following:

"We must punish, put down and extirpate rebellion treason and abolition. Men have no right to injure society and to jeopard the lives and property of their neighbors, under cover of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Nor have they any right to practice immorality, incest and licentiousness, under pretense of religion. The North, for its own safety, must so legislate as to suppress all agitation that endangers property morality and christianity. The South, regarding either honor or security, cannot long continue in a Union which subverts no other purpose but to endanger and oppose her institutions."

On this a New York paper justly remarks:

Not content with controlling things in Kansas and Washington, the Enquirer confidently looks forward to the election of Buchanan as the first great step toward the suppression of freedom of speech and freedom of the press throughout the entire North. Our State legislation, it seems, is to be taken under slavedriving control; and under pain, we suppose of being held like the free State men of Kansas, guilty of flat treason and rebellion and having the national power employed to punish offenders, the North is to suppress all agitation that endangers property, morality and christianity, which fine sounding phrase is only a Virginia paraphrase for slaveholding. The Northern States, we suppose, will be required one and all to place on their statute books the famous act of the bogus Legislature of Kansas, to punish offences against slave property by which the penalty of death is inflicted on the harboring, assisting or concealing of any runaway

slave; the penalty of five years imprisonment at hard labor for printing or publishing any sentiment calculated to disturb the slaveholder in his possession of human beings.

The principle avowed in the Ostend Circular is as applicable to the Free States as to foreign territories and the illustration of "the burning house" is just as much in point. If the sovereignty of the Free States endangers the peace or safety of the South in the exercise of slaveholding, then "by every law Human and Divine" to save themselves from ruin, the South must conquer and annex the North and bring it under the rules in force in the Slave States.

†† Men high in office and social position at the North have said that "Sumner only received his deserts," while multitudes of editors and others have denounced the Free State men of Kansas as traitors for refusing submission to the unjust and tyrannical laws of the so called Legislature of that Territory, and doing only what our Revolutionary Fathers did, contending for Freedom. Senator Douglas, a prominent supporter of the present administration and advocate of the Cincinnati Platform, says:

"Our platform tells you resistance to the law is treason, and treason shall be rebuked. The Democracy uphold the law in Kansas, while the Negro Worshipers, who do not like the law, are for shooting down the officers. This was the whole Kansas difficulty."

Here the outrageous laws of the Kansas Legislature are endorsed, and we are assured that the platform of the pro slavery party denounces those who oppose those laws as traitors. This is just what English ministers said of our fathers of the Revolution who contended against unjust and oppressive laws, as Hampden did, and as every real friend of liberty should do.

¶¶ David R. Atchison writes to a gentleman in South Carolina, and the letter is published in the South Carolina Times. The following is a paragraph.

My opinion is that that the South will be stirred by the transactions of these few weeks and will come up with men and money. The latter is particularly needed to aid the men. In a few months, in my opinion, there will not be an Abolitionist in Kansas; they will be swept with a clean broom. Then

the war will be carried elsewhere, if war we are to have.

*** As a specimen of the state of public conscience, the following quotation is given from a late article, written by Hon. Isaac F. Redfield, the present Chief Justice of Vermont, a man of coolness, and regarded heretofore as an ultra Conservative, an old school Democrat, and in whom as a man and a judge all have so much confidence that he has been elected by the opposite political party, which has been in power for many successive years, to his present high office. He says he sees "no alternative now but in civil war or secession," and adds:

"It seems strange that sober men will not see it. If the two sections of this Republic cannot be kept together in peace and quiet, nay, if they cannot exist together, short of one submitting to relinquish freedom of speech, freedom of debate, freedom of action, freedom of thought even, then we must say the sacrifice is too costly. And is any man so base, so much a craven—a very slave—that he could esteem the republic worth such a sacrifice? Is the existence of this republic so indispensable that men are willing to entail slavery of thought and feeling upon their posterity to a thousand generations to secure it?"

He says he has no sympathy with Senator Sumner's views, and if so, as has been well said,

"When ultra conservative men think and write like this, it may be imagined what is the state of feeling among those who have personal sympathy with Senator Sumner's 'peculiar theories'."

††† On another occasion, he said—

"I have said that I never could vote for it myself, and I repeat that I never can, and never will vote, and no earthly power will ever make me vote to spread slavery over territory where it does not exist."—*Henry Clay's Speech, Feb. 6, 1850.*

The reader will observe the qualification above. It is not said that we are to resolve to attempt to abolish slavery in the original states at all hazards, nor politically to meddle with it at all, whatever more means we may employ. We are to do what we can "peacefully, constitutionally and rightfully."—It is our duty to spread light, employ moral suasion, at the north and south as far as we can, and take care to cherish an utter abhorrence of ourselves for the system, and inculcate it on the rising generation.